



# Media Interviews

Most of the interviews you see on TV or read in print are just part of the story. Because they just blend into the story, you probably don't give the interview itself much thought. But you've seen them — those interviews that make you cringe and think, "What on earth were they were thinking?" As much as you may want to run from a reporter with a microphone, it is your job as your organization's spokesperson to conduct or organize the interview the reporter is seeking, and the command wants to do.

As a PAO, you are a professional communicator. Your skills at conducting various types of interviews will be the measure of your professionalism and success as a PAO. While you might have the best communication plan and strategy, the success of that plan often rests on your ability to execute effective interviews. Bottom line: as marksmanship is to the infantry, interviews are your fundamental skill as PAOs.

Throughout this course, you will conduct a series of interviews – print, on camera, radio and live talk backs that are tied to the various scenarios we have been or will be discussing. These replicate the events you will encounter as DOD public affairs officers. Master these techniques and you are well on your way to being ready to handle the fast-paced, demanding environment you will encounter on the job.



*Photo courtesy of usarmy.vo.llnwd.net*

# Types of Interviews

There are various forms of interviews that you will be exposed to as a PAO. For the trained PAO, each of these represents an opportunity for you to get your message out to key audiences. While the media representative is the means by which you will reach your audience, it is important to note that the goal of any interview you will conduct is raising awareness within your audience members. The interviews you will be conducting at DINFOS are as follows:

## Print interviews

Print interviews may be done face-to-face with the reporter or through a phone call, depending on time constraints and logistics. The distinguishing factor for print interviews is the level of detail that the medium allows. Newspapers and news magazines are considered the informing medium. This allows the PAO to present in depth information regarding

the topic, implying an extensive amount of research is needed to properly prepare for this type of interview.

Think of how long a paragraph is in a newspaper story. Try to convey that amount of information in a print interview for each question asked of you by a reporter.

While the tendency might be to relax since you are not on camera, you must still project energy and confidence. Your non-verbal language may communicate more than your spoken word does.



*U.S. Navy Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Jessica Echerri, assigned to aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt, interviews Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Rick D. West during the ship's mentorship fair in Newport News, Va., Jan. 19, 2012. Issues addressed during the fair included fitness, financial stability, mental health and spirituality. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Andrew Sulayao)*

# Types of Interviews (continued)

## On camera interviews

These interviews can be conducted live or recorded and saved for later airing. These can also be conducted in a television studio as part of a program. However due to the nature of our organization you will find the majority of the on camera interviews you will conduct are done on location. The distinguishing factor for on camera interviews is brevity inherent in television news and the emotional impact of the visual medium.

TV necessitates very brief answers. The best answers are in sound bites, which are 10 to 20 seconds. Your responses must incorporate an answer and a command message within that 10 to 20 second timeframe.

Skype and other new formats provide on-camera opportunity from any remote location as long as you have a webcam and internet connection.



*Peruvian reporters interview U.S. Air Force Maj. Ivan Acosta and U.S. Navy Cmdr. Garry Wright, right, during their visit to a school construction project in Callao, Peru Feb 1, 2012. Acosta, a foreign affairs officer, and Wright, the mission commander of the high speed vessel Swift are taking part in HSV-Southern Partnership Station (SPS). SPS is an annual deployment of U.S. ships to the U.S. Southern Command's area of responsibility to the Caribbean and Latin America for information sharing involving navies, coast guards and civilian services throughout the region. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Jennifer Grier*

# Types of Interviews (continued)

## Live talk backs

This type of interview allows a guest or multiple guests to be interviewed via satellite by a host at a distant location. The format was popularized by ABC's Nightline during the 1980 Iranian hostage crisis. Since the producers of the first program were unable to get the desired guests on set with Ted Koppel, they decided to have him interview the guests from long distance. Soon they realized this worked to the program's advantage.

Today, virtually every television news operation has satellite (or live remote) interview capabilities allowing it to cover news more inexpensively and conduct interviews with people who might otherwise not have been available. Remember that you can also conduct live interviews with television stations via telephone when a video feed is not feasible. These are referred to as "phoners."

## Radio Interviews

For some radio interviews you will be invited into a studio to speak with an interviewer, but the majority of radio interviews are phoners. These type of interviews are typically called in through the phone. They can be live or recorded for later editing and airing.

Just because the interviewer can't see you does not mean your demeanor does not matter. The audience is only focusing on your voice and so your tone and energy should appropriately reflect the subject you are talking about. You can have notes available, but be cognizant of shuffling through papers, and certainly do not read your answers. Your credibility will suffer as the audience will perceive that you don't know what you are talking about.

Now that we've discussed the various types of interviews will conduct as a PAO, let's discuss the steps of the interview process.

## Interview steps

Regardless of the type of interview you will conduct, these steps provide an effective checklist for ensuring you are well prepared to make the most of this opportunity to communicate with your public. Think of an interview as an opportunity to get your message out. While the media is not a target audience, it is a conduit to get your message out to that target audience.

Consider everything you say to a reporter as on the record, even the initial request for an interview from a reporter. Build a working relationship with journalists. The more you understand how they do their jobs, the better they can help you do your job of getting information out.



*Photo courtesy of [www.defense.gov](http://www.defense.gov)*



# Deciding to do the Interview

## Initial query

The process begins when a media representative calls. Ensure you: (ETM pp. 41, 61-63)

## Get all of the pertinent information

When a reporter calls, establish a rapport first. Be polite, honest, helpful and friendly. Communicate your wish to be helpful. Don't automatically agree or refuse the reporter's request. Stress that you need information first. Keep your tone professional. Don't say ANYTHING you don't want printed or recorded. Find out what the story is. Stay calm and negotiate – don't get drawn into an interview prematurely. Here are some questions to ask the report on initial contact:

- Your name?
- What organization/media outlet do you represent?
- What is your deadline?

## Understand the request

Continue asking the reporter questions:

- What is the story?
- What particular aspect are you focusing on?
- What's triggering your story?
- Are you speaking to others?
- How much do you know about our organization (or the subject)?
- Could I fax you some background information? What is your fax number?
- May I call you back in an hour (or 30 minutes)?
- What is your phone number?

## Staff the query

- Refer to legal or higher headquarters, your boss or chief of staff.

## Feasibility

Don't assume you have to do the interview. Don't do an interview if the subject is inappropriate or if your organization is not at the correct level to answer the reporter's questions. For example, if the reporter is asking questions that should be answered at a higher level, offer assistance and provide the correct contact and phone number for the reporter.

At this point you must assess your ability to support

the request. Ultimately you are asking if you and your organization CAN and SHOULD conduct the interview. (ETM pp. 63):

"Should we?" consideration-

- Are the questions answerable within security, accuracy, propriety and policy (SAPP)?
- Are the questions answerable at this level of command?
- What will we get out of it?
- Is this an opportunity to put the event/story in context?

"Can we?" consideration-

- Is someone available to be interviewed?
- Is there time to properly prepare?

What are the risks if we do the interview? What are the risks if we don't do the interview?

Will our comments during the interview be used to balance the story?

## Determination

The PAO, as an advisor to the commander, must come to a determination on the feasibility of the interview request. Sources of guidance can be members of the staff, higher headquarters, and other PA assets related to the issue. Remember that you might be one of several interviews the reporter is conducting regarding this issue. Coordination is critical.

# Planning

Once you have determined that you will support the interview request, you must begin planning for the event – in coordination with the reporter and those people related to the issue. It is your information battlefield and you want to control that information environment. Even though the reporter called you, you still should negotiate the interview (OD pp. 81-84, 96-97):

- Set up
- Date/Time/Location
- Format (live or taped)
- Duration
- Who is the reporter?
- Are you the best spokesperson (we will cover SME preparation during Phase II)?

## Planning considerations:

- Access (base clearance if on the installation)
- Parking
- Escorting

## Preparation (OD pp. 81-84)

- Gather the facts
- Speak to the subject matter experts
- Review existing public affairs guidance
- Develop ground rules for interview
- Review guidelines for release (SAPP)
- Collect background data
- Develop documents to support the interview:
  - Response to query – Statement and responses to reporter's initial query.
  - Message development plan – reporter's questions and potential follow-ups with responses that include relevant command messages and talking points
  - Command messages
  - Press release/press kit

Now that we've discussed the preparation involved, let's discuss the next critical step leading up to the interview – rehearsal. This is where you will identify any pitfalls before you conduct the actual interview.

## Rehearsal

Once you have prepared for the interview, the most critical step is rehearsal. This is where you will be able to discover any issues and hone your ability to

effectively respond to the reporter's questions and put the story into an accurate context.

During rehearsal, consider the following tips and techniques of effective interviewing:

- Lead with a punch – answer the first question with your primary messages in mind.
- Stay in your lane – ensure you are not speaking about issues that are outside of your purview, yet use the opportunity to discuss relevant topics that are in your lane.
- Always “on the record” – every comment is for attribution to you.
- Avoid acronyms and military jargon.
- Keep it simple – break information down as if you talking to your mother or sibling.
- Tell the truth – truth is fundamental to you and your unit.
- It is okay to say you don't know. NEVER speculate.
- Stay cool, confident and in control.
- Accentuate the positive and don't repeat the negative.
- Listen, pause, think and then respond with confidence.

## Attribution

While every interview you will conduct at DINFOS is considered on the record, you should be aware of the various categories of attribution within which an interview can occur. Depending on the level of command and other circumstances, there may be a time when interviews are not exclusively on the record. These interviews are used to raise the level of awareness of the media representative or during special circumstances that are not appropriate for on the record attribution. Understand that any interviews done outside the purview of on-the-record attribution are risky and dependent on a mutual trust between the interviewee and the reporter (ETM pp. 69).

- **On the record:** All the comments may be quoted, and the name of the source identified. Example: “... said Col. James Smith, spokesman for Unit X.”
- **On background:** The source cannot be identified by name, only by status or position. Example: “... said a senior commander”
- **Deep background:** Reporters can use the information, but cannot attribute the information to a

# Planning (continued)

particular source.

● **Off the record:** Information is not to be quoted, but is provided to help reporters understand the larger context of the story or event.

## Effective responses (ETM pp. 66-78)

- Remember the formula: Information + command message = effective response
- In response to a crisis or accident, the formula is: Tell what happened, what you're doing to fix it, and bridge to the command message.
- When relevant, condolences must be in the lead portion of the interview; they must be smooth and sincere. This takes practice.
- The "do over" – If you stumble over your words, ask to start again. This only works for recorded interviews.
- Bridging – This is the verbal maneuvering from the answer to your command message. So that it doesn't come off robotic, again this takes practice. (ETM pp. 79-80).

## Bridging

PAOs can retain control of an interview through a powerful tool. Bridging allows you to answer a reporter's question while also highlighting information relevant to your command. For instance, if there were no injuries in a barracks during a fire, you could talk about the importance of swift emergency response. If soldiers survived the fire unharmed because they had practiced their escape plan, you could talk about the military maintaining the high safety standards through continuous training. Keep prevention or "safety first" messages closely linked to the current fire story. The more tailored the message, the more likely the media will be interested.

How bridging works. Say you are asked to confirm that a plane crash was caused by engine failure; rather than simply answering yes or no, you could add, "Let me emphasize that the U.S. Air Force strives to maintain the highest safety standards."

## Examples of bridges

- "What's most important to know ..."
- "That's not my area of expertise, but what I do know is ..."

- "With that said ..."
- "Let me put all this in perspective by saying ..."
- "This is an important point because ..."
- "Let me point out that ..."
- "And remember ..."
- "Let me add that ..."

Now that we've talked about the various types of interviews that you'll conduct and the extensive planning and rehearsals necessary, let's discuss the final preparations and actual conduct of the interview.

## Final preparations

As you prepare to meet the reporter, the final checks you make are critical. Be aware of the tactics some reporters might use to elicit unfavorable responses (ETM pp. 99-108).

- False facts
- Reinterpretation
- Putting words in your mouth
- False conclusions
- Hypothetical questions
- Baiting (ploy where reporter attempts to draw you to anger, lures you into saying something you will later regret. They might keep asking the same uncomfortable questions.)
- Silence ... it's amazing how quickly we want to fill it.

## Print interview considerations (ETM pp. 109)

- It is now standard practice to record the interview, this protects the boss and ensures you have a complete record of the interview
- Avoid any interruptions. Turn off the phone. Ensure you don't have any previous commitments. This will disrupt your ability to deliver an effective interview.
- Present details and research. You have the time (and the reporter has the expectation) to present in depth information. Look for opportunities to present visual information that could support your messages (charts, graphs, etc.).

## On camera considerations (ETM 114-123)

- Select a good location by working with reporters and photographers. Ensure your background complements your message and topic of discussion. Ensure area is

# Planning (continued)

also free of visual and audio distractions (traffic, loud noises, high traffic area, etc.).

- Allow time for camera setup.
- Assume the camera is recording, even if the “red light” is not on.
- Find a comfortable way to hold your hands. Putting them behind your back in the “at-ease” position makes you look stiff. Be aware of the angle of your head.
- Television is all about visuals. Practice in front of a mirror or a camera and watch yourself for distracting or conflicting body language.
- Look at the reporter (not the camera), except for live talk backs.
- Keep responses short (ideally 10-20 second sound bites that will be part of the story). Think of edit points in your delivery. Have you given the editor a good starting and end point in your responses that capture your answer and the command message?
- Responses should stand alone. Avoid saying, “as I mentioned earlier.”
- Set a controlled pace. By looking downward while you are listening to the question and gathering your thoughts for the response, you will control the pace of the interview. When you are ready to respond, look up and at the reporter, then start your response.

And, please, turn your phone off during an interview.

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/12/26/newt-gingrichs-phone-ring\\_n\\_2367510.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/12/26/newt-gingrichs-phone-ring_n_2367510.html)

Newt Gingrich's embarrassing ringtone

## **Final checklist**

- Appearance – Uniform, haircut, covered/uncovered. For on camera: Make-up (ladies AND gentlemen) - keep a stash of powder and tissues to blot sweat/oil from faces and heads, check in a mirror to make sure you look presentable. Hair/bangs appear longer on camera. Shirts should be ironed. Keep a lint roller and small pair of scissors on hand to cut threads. High definition and digital TV pick up the smallest details.
- Printed materials – Press releases, fact sheets, press kits, bios, etc.
- Location considerations – Make sure nothing has changed since you last checked the site.
- B-roll – This is video footage of a scene for a story. Find out the reporter's requirements ahead of time.

- Coordinate and confirm the meeting time. It is a good idea to exchange telephone numbers for last-minute changes to the interview schedule.
- Ensure security is aware that media guests will be on post (where applicable).

Now that we've covered the events leading up to the interview, let's discuss what happens once you actually make contact with the reporter.

## **Pre-interview**

Refer to your grading guide and assignment instructions for print and on camera interviews in your student guide. This is the criteria we will use to evaluate your performance during these events. It all starts with your first interaction with the reporter, prior to the interview.

- Spend time discussing reporter's prior knowledge of the subject. This will set the stage for follow on discussions and alert you to any corrections of misinformation you need address. The key here is listening.
- Determine the reporter's deadline. This will let you know the amount of time you have to get information back to the reporter before the story is submitted for publication or airing.
- Concisely bring the reporter up to date on situation, ensuring you include your command messages in the dialogue. Give the reporter a media kit that contains relevant take-away information, and you may want to go over a few key elements in it as you bring the reporter up to speed. This will help you frame the interview.

**Ground rules** – These are rules regarding media coverage of military operations, personnel, etc., that are established as a precondition to coverage. They inform the reporter of the guidelines/ground rules for the interview, explaining reasoning behind guidelines.

Specific ground rules will vary with each command and organization and are situation specific. They are meant to protect members of the armed services from the release of information which could potentially threaten their security or safety during ongoing operations. They are not written to prevent the release of information that may be derogatory, embarrassing, negative or non-complimentary.



## Planning (continued)

However, there are standard ground rules routinely established that preclude the release or coverage of timely and/or specific operational information. Broad ground rules will often be established by a higher command and will specify what is releasable or what is not releasable. They also detail a means by which media can appeal adverse decisions regarding coverage or release.

### Information normally not releasable:

- Force size, geographic location, status, etc.
- Specifics on tactics, techniques, and procedures.
- Identifying information and/or images of wounded in action or killed in action prior to 24 hours past the notification of next of kin.
- Rules of engagement.



Photo courtesy of <http://www.northwestmilitary.com>

# Process

## Interview

This is the moment of truth. As you can see, the amount of time you spend conducting the interview is minimal compared to the amount of time needed to prepare and rehearse. This is where your planning efforts pay off.

- Listen, pause, think, and then speak.
- Ensure you understand the question being asked. If not, ask the reporter to re-ask/rephrase the question.
- Answer fully, truthfully and concisely, ensuring that you maintain SAPP limitations.
- Include a command message into your response, making sure the message is relevant to the question/topic.
- Maintain eye contact with the reporter while answering the question, being aware of your non-verbal communication.

## Interview “no-nos” (OD pp. 115-116)

Don't ask if you can review the story in advance. Most professional reporters will deny your request, just as you would deny a request to view your planning products before they are cleared for release. You must trust that your efforts to include your messages throughout the interview have adequately and accurately portrayed your story. If mistakes occur, address them after publication. Do not tell broadcast reporters you think 30 to 60 seconds is too short a time to tell your story adequately. They are no more satisfied with the time constraints they work under than you are. Only 21 or 22 minutes of a half-hour network television news program are devoted to news; the rest is commercials.

Do not tell a reporter you will provide written answers to questions if he/she will send them to you. That type of exchange probably is too time-consuming to meet the news deadlines. In any case, it can make the reporters think you are hiding something because you will not talk face to face. Interviews are opportunities to put your story into context. This is difficult to do via email.

Do not ask to keep your comments off the record. Remember that the sole reason a reporter is interviewing you is literally for the record – that is, to write and produce a story for publication or airing.

Editors are adamant that reporters identify their sources in all but the most unusual circumstances. Remember all of your DINFOS interviews will be on the record.

## Post-interview

This is your opportunity to reaffirm the messages you delivered during your interview. At this time, the reporter is beginning to assess the information you gave him and formulating the final story. You have a final opportunity to influence his understanding of the topic. (OD pp. 84).

- Ask the reporter if his needs were met, take notes and coordinate follow-on actions.
- Confirm the broadcast time or publication date. You will need this information to record and assess coverage.
- Contact information should be located in your press kit for the reporter to use following the interview. Remind the reporter about it.
- Leave the reporter with a summary of your command's position on the topic. This will resonate with the reporter as he begins compiling the story. This is the final takeaway message for the reporter – the last thing you want him to remember.

Now that we've looked at the entire interview process, your job as a PAO is not over yet. Let's discuss the actions you must take after the interview process.

## Assessment

After the story has aired or has been published, you must assess the impact of your interview. Review the final product with a focus on the following: (OD pp. 100-102):

- Did your command messages come across?
- Did you fully answer the questions?
- Did you correctly predict the questions?
- Were there any errors in fact? How will you address them?

As you can see, preparation is the key to any interview. Still, live interviews carry a special set of considerations that PAOs must take into account. Let's talk about the live talk-back.

# Live Talk-back considerations

Live talk backs are one of the most common types of interviews you will be conducting in a deployed environment.

## **Pros and cons**

From the interviewee's point of view, satellite interviews are timesaving and efficient. A crew will often come to your location. When a crew shows up, it will have everything it needs, including a truck, lights and a camera.

At worst you might have to go to a local studio or bureau. Sometimes you might be the only person in the room, with everything else being handled remotely from the TV studio. In Washington, D.C., it's pretty common...and many stations around the United States have access to a remote studio in D.C. There are also live drops at the Capitol at both the House and the Senate.

A great benefit of the live talk-back format is that it's the only one in which the interviewee looks directly at his audience. Because you look directly into the camera it gives you a great opportunity to connect with the audience.

Live talk-backs are loved and hated for the same reason — the lack of non-verbal feedback from the host and other guests. Some people prefer this because they feel they are better able to concentrate by focusing solely on the camera and the questions. Others find it odd to be managing and gauging the interview by sound alone. This is especially challenging when you are one of multiple guests.

## **Setting and technology** (ETM pp. 116-117)

As mentioned before, one of the main reasons for TV stations to use this type of interview is the ease and lower expense, so it gives them more bang for their buck. There are some things you're in control of and things you need to be aware of.

Whether you are interviewed from your office, a local bureau of a cable channel or network or from a jungle island in the Pacific, just be aware that the moment you step in front of the camera or near a microphone, everything is on the record, even if the interview hasn't started. It's entirely possible your microphone

might accidentally be opened or an engineer could inadvertently flip a switch beaming you out around the world. The rule of thumb is it's all on the record until you see the tail lights of the satellite truck driving away.

IFB, (interruptible feedback) – This piece of equipment, otherwise known as the earpiece, is one of two pieces needed by the guest to do an interview. The other is a lavalier or wireless microphone. The IFB is how you hear questions and comments going out over the air. This is also how you'll hear the producer, as they get ready to come to you.

If, as the guest, you are asked if you'd like a monitor so you can see the host and other guests during the interview, we suggest turning it down. It's useful if you're looking at b-roll to explain something but for just an interview it's a distraction that may cause you to start looking at the monitor and not at your audience. It is critical that almost 100 percent of your eye contact be in the center of the camera lens. For many people the natural reaction is to look up or down as they listen to a question or other guest. That is not a luxury in the satellite interview. The camera might be on you at any time; always maintain eye contact and look into the center of the lens.

## **Greeting and closing** (ETM pp. 114-128)

The most common mistake interviewees make is to believe they are not on camera until introduced. The result is that the audience has been looking at the guest for several seconds, already making judgments about their credibility and likeability. REMEMBER: viewers come to some conclusions about you in less than 10 seconds.

The moment you hear the host speaking, regardless of what they're saying, assume you're on camera. That means you need to have a smile, or relaxed look on your face before the camera comes to you. Even if the subject matter involves causalities or is troubling, greet the audience affirmatively. If a smile is not appropriate, still nod and respond with, "Thank you for having me on your program," or "thank you for allowing me to talk with your viewers." The first impression should be that you want to be there.

When the interview ends, thank the host for the

# Live Talk-back considerations (continued)

opportunity to have been there. Assume the interview is over when you get an “all clear” message

in your ear or from the field producer/camera person.



*Photo courtesy of [www.isaf.nato.int](http://www.isaf.nato.int)*



# Additional Notes

## Tips for success

Interviews on a magazine program on MSNBC or CNN might run about four minutes. It's rare that a satellite interview within a local news broadcast will last more than two minutes. Every question counts. Respond to each question and bridge to your command message often, using examples, anecdotes and stories to give your message life and credibility (OD pp. 101-110).

Build rapport with the crew. In the old days, a live shot involved a camera operator, a technician to handle lights and sound and a field producer. Today competitive pressures and improvements in technology mean that you may face only one person to handle the set up and operation of the camera AND run the truck (if it's a microwave truck). Ask whoever is running the shot on your end to give you a clear signal when you're off the air.

Provide B-roll and graphics. Many times stations will show B-roll during your interview. Most of the time they have their own, but it's a nice gesture to offer yours. If you're speaking on something technical and you think your graphics would aid understanding, make sure you offer those as well.

Get comfortable with the IFB. Make certain your IFB is secure in your ear and that you can hear the producer, host or anchor. Let someone (on-site tech/producer, etc.) know as soon as possible if you're having trouble hearing and they can adjust the volume/troubleshoot.

Listen closely. Usually the reporter or anchor will precede your interview. Ask to listen to your lead-in through the IFB so you know what came before you. Minor inaccuracies are usually not worth correcting on the air (your time is limited). However, it is okay to offer a correction if needed after answering your first question.

Listen closely to each question and comment and find ways to bridge to your command messages.

Look directly into the camera. It's your responsibility to build rapport with the audience through the lens of the camera. Put other distractions out of your mind.

Imagine the camera as a person and then talk to that person. Sit up straight with both feet flat on the floor, don't swivel or lean, avoid tilting your head and use appropriate facial expressions to engage the audience.

The camera is always on. Assume the camera is always recording both sound and visuals. You're always on, so maintain your composure and smile if appropriate. Avoid scratching and fiddling and be careful about pre-program chatter with techs.

Consider your backdrop. Be aware of the setting for your interview. While the field crew or producer make the final decision, feel free to suggest a backdrop or setting that supports your message or puts you in a positive environment. If you're at the scene of an emergency expect to be interviewed in front of the emergency equipment or the accident itself.

## Post-interview

Just because the live shot is over doesn't mean it's disappeared into TV history. The interview is always recorded at the station. Now it can, and usually will, be used in other forms. For example, you may do a live talk-back for the noon show, and then you see a clip on the 5 p.m. newscast or maybe another used in a package in the late evening news. It can be put into replay mode. Many cable channels do a "live" newscast and then it replays until they do another one. Live interviews, like almost everything else in TV news, are always recorded.



*Photo courtesy of [www.128arw.ang.af.mil](http://www.128arw.ang.af.mil)*

# Conclusion

As we discussed earlier, your skills at conducting various types of interviews will be part of the measure of your professionalism and success as a PAO. While you might have the best communication plan and strategy, the success of that plan often rests on your ability to execute effective interviews. Bottom line: interviews are your fundamental skill as PAOs. As you can now see, the planning and preparation

are extensive for the short time you will actually be in contact with a reporter. To be effective at conducting interviews, you must practice. There is no magic formula. This is just the beginning. Continue to hone the skills you have learned today and you will be an asset to your commander and a critical element of DOD's effort to keep our publics informed.

# References and Additional Resources

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